

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00 EB-08 AGRE-00 /080 W
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R 221000Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6180
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 0499

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E.O. 11652: GDS
SUBJ: EARLY ELECTION PROSPECTS
TAGS: PINT, TU

REF: 76 ANKARA 7922 (DTG 181225Z OCT 76)

BEGIN SUMMARY- THERE IS INCREASING DISCUSSION HERE IN
POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES CONCERNING THE POS-
SIBILITIES OF EARLY ELECTIONS. HOWEVER, EMBASSY CONTINUES
BELIEVE THAT PROSPECTS, BY A NARROWING MARGIN, CONTINUE TO
FAVOR THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S LIMPING ALONG IN OFFICE
UNTIL REGULARLY SCHEDULED ELECTIONS IN OCT. END SUMMARY

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1. TURKISH POLITICAL CIRCLES ARE CURRENTLY SUFFERING FROM
A RECURRENCE OF EARLY ELECTION FEVER. CONTRIBUTING TO THE
RECENT OUTBREAK (WHICH IS APPROACHING THE EPIDEMIC LEVEL)
HAVE BEEN THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:
A. CONTINUING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE JUSTICE PARTY
(JP) AND NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP). IN ADDITION TO
PREVIOUSLY REPORTED DISPUTES SUCH AS DIFFERENCES OVER

CONTROL AND CREDIT FOR THE INDUSTRIALIZATION PROGRAM,
CONCESSIONS TO THE EC, THE IMPORT REGIME AND UDI FOR CYPRUS,
A FEW OTHER CONTENTIOUS ITEMS HAVE ARISEN RECENTLY:

(1) NSP-CONTROLLED STATE ECONOMIC ENTERPRISES
AWARDED NEW YEAR'S BONUSES TO WHITE COLLAR EMPLOYEES.
NEITHER WHITE COLLAR WORKERS IN OTHER STATE ENTERPRISES
AND MINISTRIES NOR ANY GOVERNMENT BLUE COLLAR EMPLOYEES
WERE AWARDED BONUSES. PRIMIN DEMIREL HAS SOPKEN OUT
AGINAST THE BONUSES AND DIRECTED MINFINANCE ERGENEKON TO
RECOVER THEM IF THE NSP HAD ACTED ILLEGALLY. SO FAR NO
ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN.

(2) TURKISH RADIO AND TELEVISION DIRECTOR
GENERAL KARATAS. THE NSP AND OTHER PARTIES HAVE CRITICIZED
TRT'S "PARTISAN" PERFORMANCE UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP AND THE
COUNCIL OF STATE HAS RULED HIS APPOINTMENT ILLEGAL. HIS
ONLY SUPPORTER APPEARS TO BE DEMIREL, AND THIS HAS BEEN
SUFFICIENT UNTIL NOW.

(3) SALARY INCREASES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS. THE
NSP AND THE OPPOSITION REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) HAVE
BEEN COLLABORATING DURING THE BUDGET DEBATES IN SECURING A
HIGHER SALARY INCREASE FOR CIVIL SERVANTS THAN INITIALLY
ADVOCATED BY DEMIREL AND THEORETICALLY AGREED TO BY THE
NSP.

B. OTHER COALITION CONFLICTS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT
LIMITED TO:

(1) A BITTER NSP-NATIONALSIT ACTION PARTY
(NAP) RIVALRY FOR CONTROL OF THE POLITICAL FAR RIGHT. MAJOR
ARENAS OF CONFRONTATION HAVE BEEN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
AND TEACHERS, STUDENT AND YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS. THE NAP
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HAS REACTED STRONGLY TO NSP MININTERIOR ASILTURK'S ANNOUNCED
DETERMINATION TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE RIGHT-WING
COMMANDOES AS WELL AS LEFTIST ANARCHISTS. THE NAP ORGANIZATIONAL
ASSEMBLY RECENTLY GAVE AUTHORITY TO PARTY CHAIRMAN TURKES
TO PULL THE NAP OUT OF THE COALITION IF HE SHOULD DETERMINE
IT TO BE IN THE PARTY'S INTEREST. A SENIOR NAP OFFICIAL
RECENTLY TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE NSP HAD REPLACED THE RPP
AS THE PARTY'S CHIEF ANTAGONIST.

(2) COMPETITION BETWEEN NSP AND REPUBLICAN
RELIANCE (RR) MINISTRIES FOR CONTROL OF THE NASCENT DEFENSE
INDUSTRY. THE NSP WANTS IT FOR THE MININDUSTRY AND
TECHNOLOGY; THE RR FOR ITS MINDEFENSE. THE RR HAS BEEN
DISGRUNTLED BECAUSE PRIMIN DEMIREL APPEARS NOT TO HAVE
BEEN WILLING TO COMMIT HIMSELF ON THEIR BEHALF.

(3) THE RR, WHICH SEES ITSELF AS THE ONLY
PARTY TRULY COMMITTED TO ATATURKIST PRINCIPLES, IS
BASICALLY UNEASY ABOUT ITS STRANGE ALLIANCE WITH THE
ISLAMIC REVIVALIST NSP AND THE PAN-TURANIST NAP AND ITS
ARMED STREET YOUTH.

C. INCREASING RPP-NSP COOPERATION. ONE INSTANCE, ALREADY CITED, IS COOPERATION FOR HIGHER CIVIL SERVANT SALARIES. THE TWO PARTIES ALSO PASSED THROUGH THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY A POSTPONEMENT OF MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS FROM JUNE TO DECEMBER OVER JP OBJECTIONS. PERHAPS MORE SIGNIFICANT, BUT LESS TANGIBLE, HAS BEEN THE ALMOST COMPLETE ABSENCE OF RPP-NSP CRITICISM OR ACCUSATION AGAINST THE OTHER IN SEVERAL MONTHS.

D. THE NOTION (INCREASINGLY REPORTED IN THE PRESS) THAT NOW IS THE RIGHT TIME FOR ELECTIONS. CITED REASON INCLUDE:

(1) THE INCREASING STUDENT VIOLENCE AND THE APPARENT INABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SECURE THE PEACE.

(2) CRITICISM OF THE PRESENT PARLIAMENT FOR ITS RAPIDLY PASSED, UNTIMELY, RETROACTIVE AND EXCESSIVE BOOST IN PARLIAMENTARY SALARIES.

(3) THE NEED FOR A NEW ADMINISTRATION,
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STRONGER AND MORE UNIFIED THAN THE PRESENT ONE, TO COPE WITH THE INCOMING CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND EXPECTED NEW POLICY EFFORTS IN CYPRUS, THE AEGEAN AND US-TURKISH SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS.

2. STATEMENTS FROM PARTY LEADERS HAVE FOR THE MOST PART FURTHERED THE SPECULATION CONCERNING THE FALL OF THE GOVERNMENT AND EARLY ELECTIONS.

A. RPP CHAIRMAN ECEVIT, WHOSE PARTY HAS BEEN COOL TO THE IDEA OF EARLY ELECTIONS FOR OVER A YEAR, STATED ON JANUARY 16 THAT HE COULD "ENVISAGE MOVING FORWARD THE ELECTION DATE IN ORDER TO SAVE THE COUNTRY FROM CRISIS," PARTICULARLY THE INCREASING VIOLENCE. ALTHOUGH ECEVIT DID NOT LIST PRECONDITIONS, HE INDICATED THAT THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT SHOULD FIRST BE REPLACED WITH AN APPROPRIATE CARETAKER ELECTION GOVERNMENT.

B. PRINMIN DEMIREL, WHO FOR MONTHS HAS DISMISSED REPORTS THAT INTRA-COALITION RIVALRY THREATENED THE LIFE OF THE GOVERNMENT INITIALLY RESPONDED TO ECEVIT'S COMMENT BY STATING HE EXPECTED THE COALITION TO CONTINUE IN OFFICE UNTIL OCTOBER. HOWEVER, AFTER A WEEK OF INCREASED PRESS SPECULATION AND COMMENTARY, DEMIREL REPORTEDLY TOLD THE JP PARLIAMENTARY GROUP JANUARY 19 THAT "WE COULD LEAVE THE GOVERNMENT. WE ARE NOT BOUND TO THE GOVERNMENT." DEMIREL WENT ON TO STATE, HOWEVER, THAT THE JP HAD A RESPONSIBILITY TO PREVENT A CRISIS AND WARNED THAT A GOVERNMENT CRISIS WOULD SURELY FOLLOW THE BREAK-UP OF THE COALITION. MILLIYET REPORTED THAT DEMIREL TOLD A MEETING OF JP GENERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD THE SAME DAY THAT HE FAVORED ELECTIONS IN MAY OR JUNE "IF IT WERE POSSIBLE".

C. JP SEC GEN MENTESE WAS REPORTED BY JANUARY 20 PRESS TO HAVE SAID "OUR INNER DESIRE IS EARLY ELECTIONS IN MAY

OR JUNE. HOWEVER, THIS DEPENDS ON THE DECISION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY." JP DEP CHAIRMAN CEVHERI RESPONDED TO ECEVIT'S OVERTURE BY CALLING FOR THE RPP NOT TO WAIT ON A FORMAL PROPOSAL OF THE JP, BUT TO BRING THE ISSUE BEFORE PARLIAMENT IF THEY DESIRED. A JP SENATOR (WHO IS NOT AMONG

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THE PARTY LEADERSHIP) TOLD EMBOFF JANUARY 20 THAT HE EXPECTED DEMIREL TO PULL OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT AFTER THE BUDGET VOTE AROUND MARCH 1.

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OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00 EB-08 AGRE-00 /080 W
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D. NSP CHAIRMAN EUBAKAN, WHOSE JANUARY 8 STATEMENT (TAT GOVERNMENT STABILITY WAS IMPORTANT, BUT THAT HE WOULD NOT REMAIN IN THE GOVERNMENT JUST FOR THE SAKE OF STABILITY) TRIGGERED MUCH OF THE RECENT SPECULATION ABOUT

EARLY ELECTIONS, HAS BEGUN TO BACK AWAY FROM THE IDEA. THE NSP CHAIRMANSHIP COUNCIL REPORTEDLY DECIDED TO REAFFIRM ITS PREVIOUS DECISION TO OPPOSE EARLY ELECTIONS AND ON JANUARY 18 ERBAKAN SCOFFED THAT PEOPLE HAD BEEN TALKING ABOUT EARLY ELECTIONS FOR FOUR YEARS, BUT NO PARTY WOULD BE ABLE TO OBTAIN THE APPROVAL OF ITS PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR SUCH A DECISION.

3. DESPITE THE ABOVE INDICATIONS OF INTENSE INTEREST AND
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SPECULATION ABOUT THE LIKELIHOOD OF EARLY ELECTIONS, THERE ARE SEVERAL FACTORS WHICH MITIGATE AGAINST THE PROSPECT:

A. BOTH DEMIREL AND ERBAKAN HAVE MUCH TO GAIN FROM REMAINING IN OFFICE UNTIL THE INDUSTRIALIZATION DRIVE BECOMES MORE VISIBLE. BOTH (BUT PARTICULARLY ERBAKAN) HAVE SUFFERED PUBLIC RIDICULE FROM THEIR ORGY OF FOUNDATION-LAYING CEREMONIES. BY OCTOBER, AT LEAST SOME STRUCTURES WILL BE ERECTED AND A FEW PLANTS MAY BE IN OPERATION, THUS LENDING VISIBLE CREDIBILITY TO THEIR INDUSTRIALIZATION PROMISES. SIMILARLY, THE RESULTS OF THE VILLAGE ELECTRIFICATION, POTABLE WATER AND RURAL ROAD-BUILDING PROGRAMS MAY BE MORE VISIBLE BY OCTOBER.

B. PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS ARE THAT TURKEY WILL ENJOY ANOTHER EXCELLENT HARVEST THIS YEAR. TURKEY REMAINS LARGELY RURAL AND A CONTENTED RURAL POPULATION WILL NOT LIGHTLY TURN AGAINST THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. FURTHER, THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE ABLE TO ANNOUNCE GREATLY INCREASED SUPPORT PRICES FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS THIS SUMMER AND GAIN FURTHER RURAL SUPPORT.

C. THE NSP, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT THE RPP, HAS INTERNAL DIVISIONS. ERBAKAN NEEDS TIME TO REUNITE HIS PARTY BEFORE ENTERING AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN. SIMILARLY, ALL THE BRUISES HAVE NOT HEALED FROM THE RPP'S HARD FOUGHT PRE-CONVENTION STRUGGLE.

D. IT REMAINS BASICALLY IN THE RPP'S INTEREST TO FOLLOW THE TIME-HONORED TURKISH POLICY OF LETTING THE PARTY IN POWER BE "WORN DOWN," IN DEMIREL'S CASE BY INTRA-COALITION STRUGGLES, AND ECONOMY NOT YET UNDER CONTROL AND THE CONTINUING SPECTER OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INABILITY TO CONTROL STUDENT VIOLENCE.

E. THE BASIC RELUCTANCE OF DEPUTIES OF ALL PARTIES TO VOTE THEMSELVES OUT OF OFFICE, PARTICULARLY IF THE RECENTLY VOTED PAY INCREASES ARE NOT RESCINDED. PARTY DISCIPLINE WILL BE HARD TO ENFORCE AND SMALL PARTY AND INDEPENDENT DEPUTIES WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY OPPOSE AN EARLY ELECTION PROPOSAL.

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4. AFTER WEIGHING ALL THE ABOVE FACTORS, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT EARLY ELECTIONS WILL PROBABLY NOT RPT NOT BE AGREED TO AND THAT THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT WILL LIPM ON UNTIL OCTOBER. HOWEVER, THIS IS A RATHER CLOSE CALL, BECAUSE ONE CANNOT RULE OUT THAT CONTINUING STRUGGLES WITHIN THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT COULD LEAD TO ITS COLLAPSE AT ANY-TIME. IT WOULD THEN BE REPLACED BY A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT OR, IF ONE COULD BE FORMED, ANOTHER COALITION. ALTHOUGH SUCH A GOVERNMENT MIGHT WELL OPT FOR EARLY ELECTIONS, IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT IT MIGHT CHOOSE TO GOVERN UNTIL THE SCHEDULED ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER.
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Message Attributes

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SAS ID: 3530690
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Status: NATIVE
Subject: EARLY ELECTION PROSPECTS
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